



### Christmas in Butiama and Buhemba I

The Resurrectionists in Tanzania are separated by about 650 miles/1050 kilometers. Our formation house is in the central part of the country, while our parishes are north near the southern shore of Lake Victoria. While some “take a deep breath” and make one long trip leaving early in the morning and arriving very late at night, most of us make a two-day trip of about 9 hours of driving each day.



Fr. Daniel and I decided that the aspirants and seminarians could go home for Christmas, so this gave me an opportunity to visit our two parishes in Butiama and Buhemba over Christmas time. This was providential because I can “fill in” while Fr. Maciej is on vacation. It also gave me a chance to conduct a “visitation” with the men in the parishes and those taking part in novitiate.



Brother Mosses travelled to Morogoro by bus so that we could drive together to the parishes. Baltazar, who is one of our brother candidates, travelled with us. We left early on Thursday, December 14, stayed overnight in Singida, and arrived in Butiama on Friday, December 15. I dropped off Br. Mosses and Baltazar, and then drove about 40 minutes to arrive at the parish in Buhemba.

The plan was to rest a bit on Saturday and then to have two Masses on Sunday in Buhemba. However, Fr. Phillip had a death in his family, and he asked me to drive to Butiama to cover for him while he was away. The first Mass at the parish church in Butiama is at 6:30 a.m., so I rose at 4:30 a.m. so that I could practice my Swahili

a bit more and leave at 5:30 a.m. to arrive in time. I had another Mass at 10:00 a.m. in the main church, and then a third Mass at one of the outstations at 12:00 noon.

The parish settings are quite different from what we are used to in North America. Many parishes have fields to cultivate and animals to raise to be more self-sufficient. The Butiama parish has many different types of livestock, including cows, sheep, goats, chickens, and pigs.





The “atmosphere” for Christmas is very different from what we see in the Northern Hemisphere.







African art is more popular than images of Santa Clause, elves, and his reindeer!

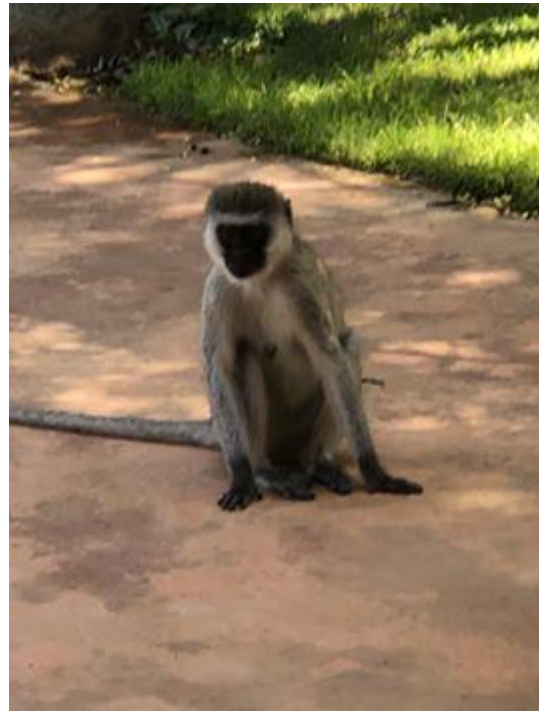








It is quite common to see monkeys in Butiama, especially around the parish area.





*More to come on [www.resurrectionists.ca](http://www.resurrectionists.ca).*